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THE HISTORY OF Conformity:

Or a PROOF of the

MISCHIEF OF IMPOSITIONS,

FROM THE

EXPERIENCE

Of more than

One Hundred Years.

LONDON:

Printed by *A. Maxwell*, and *R. Roberts*, 1681.

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To the READER by way of INTRODUCTION.

Christian Reader!

WHAT was in a great measure proved before the *Committee of Parliament* in the year 1666, that *London was burned by the treachery of Papists*, and hath withal been suspected a long time by our *wise* and *discerning Patriots*, *that a Plot was by them laid to subvert the Government of the Nation, and introduce the Popish Religion*, hath been so fully proved by a variety of Evidence before the greatest *Courts of Judicature* in *England*, since the first discovery of the late Hellish Plot, and that with this advantage (to convince us of the *Villany* and danger of that party), *That they had upon it grafted a design for the hastening of the other to assassinate his most Sacred Majesty, and several eminent Peers*, and by a *Popish army* to *massacre* all *Protestants*, as none can deny it with any degree of modesty. And if any had any inclinations to it, the murther of Sir *Edmondbury Godfrey*, and *Assassination* of Mr. *Arnold*, the manifold *lyes*, *perjuries*, *subornations*, which have been proved against them, the *device* of the *Meal-tub* Plot, *&c.* to spoil the credit of the manifold proofs against them, have been such *convictions* as none hath been able to outface, unless such as have dreamed of a liberty, yea and a merit too, for, and in doing any thing for the reputation of the *Catholick Church*, as they nickname the *Synagogue of Rome*. It is as evident that the design of the *Popish faction* was to have cast the *Odium* of these actions upon the *Protestants*. The *Odium* of Sir *Edmondbury Godfreys* death should have been cast upon *Debauches* of that *Religion*, had it not been unluckily discovered that he was murthered within the Walls of *Sommerset* House. But that of the *Kings Death* (could they have effected it) should have been thrown on the *Presbyterians*, (a name under which of late they have comprehended all *Dissenters.*) This should have engaged our credulous and furious

men to have helped them to have deſtroyed the *Diſſenters*, while they ſhould have got their *Catholick Army* in a capacity at laſt to have deſtroyed them alſo. This reſtleſs party having had this long in their deſign, no doubt wonderfully influenced ſome to procure ſuch a ſettlement of Religion upon his *Majeſties Reſtauration* as ſhould produce *Diſſenters* enough; nor is it reaſonable to think that all the latter ſevere Acts againſt *Diſſenters* were not the fruits of their counſels, conſidering how *conducive* they were to make a great number of *Proteſtants* willing for their own eaſe to have had an *Univerſal Toleration*, which (though nothing is or can be more contrary to *Popiſh* Principles) would admirably have ſerved their deſign, giving an undiſturbed liberty to their *Prieſts* and *Jeſuits* (who can never have an abode in any place without contriving the ruin of thoſe they call *Hereticks*) in our own bowels to have contrived our ruin. Or if this failed (as indeed it did) yet they knew that this way they ſhould employ all our *Courts of Judicature* againſt *Proteſtants*, ſo as they ſhould not look after them; and beſides, raiſe a mighty *odium* and *prejudice* in the hearts of *Proteſtants* one againſt another, ſo as whatever *Villany* they ſhould have effected, it would have been eaſie to have charged it upon *Diſſenters*, and there had been a party of *Proteſtants* in name ready prepared to give credit to it. It is now evident to all who will not wilfully ſhut their eyes, how near they were to have accompliſhed their deſign. But God in infinite mercy hath prevented the accompliſhment. After all this one would reaſonably think that there ſhould not be one *Proteſtant* in *England*, who ſhould not think it high time for our *Superiors* to unite all *Proteſtants*. A thing the more eaſie and reaſonable, becauſe it is apparent that it may be done without the leaſt offence to God, or ſcandal to the generality of *Reformed Churches*; and by the abatement only of ſome things which being abated, we ſhall be much more like all *Reformed Churches*, than we are.

But againſt this ſome make a mighty *outcry*, (out of what deſign God knoweth) For it is a little myſterious, that thoſe men who all along have been great pleaders for a *reconciliation* betwixt us and the *Church of Rome*, and the true Diſciples of thoſe *Biſhops*, who to prevent the *offence of that Church*, took upon them in the time of King *Charles the firſt* to expunge paſſages out of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, and to bring us as near as poſſible to them, *erected Altars*, *brought in Tapers*, and twenty things more; ſhould, now that they ſee the effect of thoſe endeavours for, and favours to *Papiſts*, not be willing

willing for the reconciling of all *Protestants* to abate those things which themselves own no where specially commanded by God; and this too at a time when the *Popish* bloody Knives are at all our Throats.

Especially considering that the true cause of retaining our *Ceremonies* at the first, and forming our *Common-Prayer-Book* in the method it is, was originally a desire so far to commend our Worship to the *Papists* (whose Religion lyes all in *Ceremonies* and *Set-forms*) that they might be proselyted to us; and the effects we have seen after an hundred years and upwards, is but the hardning of *Papists*, and the *alienating* infinite numbers of *Protestants* from us.

I am aware that a late Author in his Book call'd, *The Unreasonableness of Separation*, hath given us an account of three other reasons of the first Imposition of the *Ceremonies* upon the Reformation. 1. *A due reverence to Antiquity.* 2. *To manifest the justice and equity of the Reformation, by letting the Papists see we did not break communion with them for things meerly indifferent.* 3. *To shew our consent with other Protestant Churches.* But he had better have said nothing. For will some say, How have we reverenced *Antiquity* in retaining three of their *ceremonies*, and leaving out twenty more of greater *antiquity* (if we may believe the Books we have) than the *Surplice* and *kneeling at the Sacrament*, two of the three we have retained can pretend unto? Besides that, all the account we have of *antiquity* is from Books Printed within 200 years (for Printing is very little older), from Manuscripts, which if they bear date *three hundred years* after Christ, must be 1100 years old when they were Printed. If we stretch *antiquity* to 600 years after Christ, they must be 800 years old, and all that time generally kept in the hands of the known depravers of all Books that ever came in their hands where was any thing not for the purposes of their Church. Now what reverence is due to any such worm-eaten Records of *antiquity*, let any men of sense judg.

His second reason is as invalid; for what need was there of our keeping two or three *Ceremonies* to testifie we did not differ from them for meer *matters of indifferency*, when so many Books, so many Disputations, testified we differed from them because of their *Idolatry* in many things, and their Doctrine of *Justification by Works, &c.* The last is yet of all the most weak; for how did we by it shew our consent with other *Protestant Churches?* In the year 1552 which was the last of King *Edward*; in the year 1558, which was the first

first of Queen *Elizabeth*, there were no *Protestant Churches* but the *Lutheran Churches*, the *Suitzerland* Churches, and that of *Geneva*, besides some in *Germany*, which followed the *Reformation* of *Suitzerland* and *Geneva*. In retaining these Ceremonies we shewed a *dissent* to the *Reformed Churches* in *Suitzerland*, and at *Geneva*, and all those who followed their order, and shewed our consent only with the *Lutheran* Churches so imperfectly reformed, that in the *Synod at Dort* the Messengers of all *Reformed* Churches there met, made a difficulty to afford them the name of *Protestants*, though I think the name *Protestant* better agreed to them than that of *Evangelici*, which was the name the *Reformed* were known by for the ten first years after the Reformation began. Besides, that for *Kneeling at the Sacrament*, the *Saxon* Churches retain it upon their peculiar notion, wherein they differ from all other *Reformed* Churches, viz. *The Corporeal Presence of Christ in and with that Ordinance.*

For the retaining of some Ceremonies in the *Saxon* Churches, a double account is to be given. *Luther* and *Amsdorfius* were great Zealots for them, partly to quiet the people, who had so lately been *Papists*; and it may be partly in opposition to *Zuinglius*, and specially to *Carolostadius*, who had made himself the Author of abolishing some, during *Luther*'s absence, when he was hid for fear of a *Decree at Worms*. *Melancthon* (a very learned man) being of a more soft *ductile spirit*, with *Justus Jonas*, and some others, took *Luther*'s part. *Carolostadius* was run down; both *Zuinglius* and *Carolostadius* saw that the retaining any of the Popish Ceremonies would have no desired effect, but rather *scandalize* their friends, and harden the *Papists*; and the taking them away afterward, would be called a *Refining* upon a *Refining*; they therefore, though they bare with much some few years, yet took the first opportunity to throw them all out where they had to do. The case was much the same with us in *England*; our Ceremonies were retain'd upon no such pretences as were before expressed. There was no *Reverence* in it shewed to *antiquity*. No *consent* shewed with the *most* or *best Reformed* Churches at that time. But our best and most eminent Ministers had been *Papists*, used their *Missal*, practiced all their *Ceremonies*. At that time to have receded from the *Papists* in all things fit to have been receded from, might have been oddly look't upon by the people. Besides that the people in times of *Popery* were much strangers to any thing of *Religion* but *Ceremonies*, and hearing *Mass*; hence (as may be seen in the first *Edition* of the *Common Prayer*) many things

were

were put in, which were left out by the *Biſhops* in the 2d *Edw.* of it in K. *Edw.* time. And had it pleaſed God after Q. *Maries* time to have continued us ſuch *Biſhops* as *Cranmer*, *Hooper*, *Latimer*, *Coverdale*, &c. there is little doubt but theſe Controverſies had long ſince been at an end. But our *Biſhops* many of them were ſuch moderate men as could abide here all Queen *Maries* time; others of them were ſuch as indeed had been beyond Sea, but very *zealous* there to keep up the Book, in the framing of which themſelves had an hand (amongſt theſe was Dr. *Cox*), the ſame reaſon held as in K. *Edw.* the 6. time, for humouring the people; thus the Ceremonies came at firſt to be eſtabliſhed. For the *Forms of Prayer*, there was not the ſame reaſon for eſtabliſhing ſome *Forms at preſent* in that ſtate of the Church; there could ſcarce have been any *Praying* or *Preaching* without ſome Forms both of Prayers and Sermons; there were twenty reading Miniſters for one who had any competent abilities either to *Pray* or *Preach*. But the reaſon was the very ſame for the eſtabliſhing ſo many of the *Old Forms*, and keeping *Methods* agreeing to none of any Reformed Church. I offer it to any knowing perſons to judg whether (whatever be ſaid by ſome) this was not the true reaſon of the firſt eſtabliſhment; and they were no invaluable reaſons for the continuance of them for ſome few years until people were brought off more from their old *Superſtitions*. I find that in moſt places of *Germany* at firſt, the *Reformation* was gradual, ſome *Ceremonies* and *Superſtitious uſages* were caſt out one year, ſome the next, ſome ſeveral years after the Goſpel was firſt Preached in thoſe places.

But why theſe ſhould be continued after twenty years, when it was ſeen that the continuance of them had no effect to bring in *Papiſts*, but gave a great ſcandal to, and made a great diviſion amongſt *Proteſtants* and when people were further enlightned, and their firſt heats for their old ways of worſhip were abated, is a much greater myſtery; yet we ſhall find that in the 25, 26, 27 years of Queen *Elizabeth*, there was a more ſevere urging theſe things than ever before. I am loth to think any rancor againſt thoſe at that time called *Puritans*, was the *Original* cauſe; but do believe that an *imployment* for thoſe who managed the *Eccleſiaſtical Courts*, without uſing their power againſt the *Papiſts*, or *Moral Debauchees*, might be no little argument in the cauſe, and a deſign driven by the *Papiſts* and *Atheiſts* in the Nation to that purpoſe.

Such Conſiderations as theſe could never affect an *Engliſh Parliaments*

ment ſo as to make a firſt eſtabliſhment of them. But the ſucceeding *Parliaments* and *Princes* found them in *poſſeſſion* (that we ſay is *nine parts of a Law*) and ſome *Zealots* in the Church ſtrained their wits to make them appear *lawful* and ſo within the power of the *Superiour*, and for many of them ſeveral good men had not then *light* enough to diſcern their *unlawfulneſs*. So as there were very few that wrote to purpoſe on that argument (Dr. *Ames* was almoſt the only man in his age.) Indeed the *Ceremonies*, the *reading the Old Tranſlation of the Scripture*, and the *Apocryphal Books*, the *Subſcription*, That *there was nothing in the Common Prayer Book*, *and Book of Ordaining Prieſts and Deacons*, *but what was agreeable to Gods Word*, were an hundred year ſince argued againſt as *unlawful*, as I could prove by ſeveral writings of the *Nonconformiſts* of thoſe times (I have ſeen an ancient Manuſcript of them big enough for a juſt folio), ſome things were not then practiſed, nor required to be put in ure, though they were in the Queens *Injunctions*, &c. (ſome of them at leaſt.) In all the caſes of *Nonconformiſts* in Queen *Elizabeths* time, I find not a Miniſter complaining for being inforced to *receive*, or to *adminiſter the Sacrament* to people *kneeling*; I find nothing of any ſuffering *for not bowing at the name of Jeſus*, not railing in the *Communion-Table*, not ſetting at *Altarwiſe*, not reading the *ſecond ſervice at it*, with many more ſuch things which were brought into practice by Archbiſhop *Laud*, Biſhop *Wren*, and others. One great pretence of keeping up many of theſe things, was to avoid the *ſcandal of the Papiſts*, and to *intice them to our Religion*, &c.

We have now ſeen the effects of this in the experience of an hundred years, which have been too ſad to particularize; it were eaſie to make a Book of *Acts and Monuments* twice as big as Mr. *Foxes*, with the ſufferings of holy and good men, upon theſe accounts in that time. What manner of perſons the *Diſſenters* are, the experience of twenty years ſince his *Majeſties Reſtauration*, hath ſufficiently informed the world. What have the moſt fiery of their adverſaries to object againſt them except in the matters of their God? What kind of friend the *Popiſh party* hath been, hath been alſo made ſufficiently evident. I humbly leave it to the judgment of his *Moſt Excellent Majeſty* and his *Parliament*, whether ſeeing (confeſſedly) it may be without offence to the Divine Majeſty, *The taking away of thoſe things which alone make the Partition-wall* betwixt *Proteſtants* and *Proteſtants*, be *not as politick* as *pious*, conſidering the *Hiſtory of Conformity* from the firſt unto this very day, which might

might possibly have appeared more reasonable if I would have inserted the lamentable stories of the sufferings of good men on this account, (of which I have a plenty) but I had rather they should be forgotten, most of the Authors of them before this time have given up their account, and know whether they did good or evil; and if any be alive, I hope all good men will say, *Father forgive them, for they knew not what they did.* Only let it be the *Religious care* of our *Superiors* to prevent any further complaints of this nature in our Streets, for the Lord most certainly heareth the *crys of the Innocent and oppressed.*

The *History of Conformity*: or a Proof of the *Mischief of Impositions*, from the experience of an Hundred years.

THE notion of *Conformity* with us in *England*, hath always signified a *compliance* with, and *obedience* to such commands of *Superiors* in matters of *Doctrine*, *Worship*, and *Government* of the *Church*, as are no where expressly *originated* in the Word of God, but supposed to be there left to liberty; and being neither there *commanded*, nor *forbidden*, are presumed to be matter of *Superiors* just commands.

The power of *Superiors* to command in things which the parties commanded do agree *indifferent*, was never yet disputed by the generality of *Nonconformists*. But there being many things which Superiors call *indifferent*, which the Inferiors verily believe to be *unlawful*, the difference hath chiefly been about these, and still is so to this day.

Upon the *Reformation* of this *Nation* from *Popery* in the days of K. *Edw.* the *6th*, in the year 1552, (which was 6 *Edw. 6th*) there were *Articles of Faith* agreed on; and in the 2 & 3 *Edw. 6. cap. 1.* & 5 & 6 *Edw. 6. cap. 1. two* Acts were made *referring* to two *Common-Prayer-Books* made in the short Reign of that excellent Prince.

It must be known, that before this time in the time of K. *Hen. 8.* there were great *foundations for Reformation* laid, in the *suppression of Monasteries*, taking away the Popes *Supremacy* destruction of *Appeals to Rome*, *Printing the Bible in English*; but there was no *Reformation* in *Doctrine*, *Worship*, or *Discipline*. For the *Doctrine*, it appeareth to have been *Popish* by the *six Articles*; the first of which yet was so penned, as though it established a *corporal presence* of *Christ in the Supper*, yet it seemed to leave it *indefinite*, whether in the *Popish* or *Lutheran* sense, which possibly gave Archbishop *Cranmer*

Cranmer (who as well as *Latimer* and other good men at that time were *Lutherans*) a latitude to be an agent in *Lamberts* condemnation. The other five articles againſt *giving the Cup* to the *Laity*, and for *Private Maſſes*, and *Monkiſh Vows*, *Auricular Confeſſion*, and *Prieſts Marriages*, were *perfectly Popiſh*. So as in that time no *Nonconformiſt* appear'd, but as to Doctrine, of which *Lambert* the Martyr was one, and ſo were all thoſe that ſuffered upon the account of the *ſix Articles*, together with multitudes who fled into other Countries to avoid that Perſecution.

The *Worſhip* of thoſe days was the *Maſs*, only ſome parts of it were in *Engliſh*. The *Government of the Church* was alſo in the ſame *method*; for though three Acts had been made to authorize K. *H.* 8. to call together 32 perſons to make a Book of new *Canons*; yet for ought appeareth to us, it was not done. And poſſibly a due conſideration, that ſeveral of our greateſt *Reformers* were *Lutherans* at firſt, may ſatisfie us as to the firſt eſtabliſhment of our *Liturgy* in the method it was, and retaining of ſome Ceremonies; the *Saxon* Churches having before reformed in that method, keeping as much as they could both of the *Old Prayers* and *Ceremonies*. And it is very likely that when after Queen *Maries* time the *Reformation* came to be re-ſetled, ſome of thoſe who had a great hand in it, were poſſeſſed of the *Lutheran Principles*, as to the *Corporal Preſence*, *Forms* and *Ceremonies*, or at leaſt had a very great Reverence for *Cranmer*, *Latimer* and others (who were then dead as *Martyrs*), and choſe to fix things according to their ſentiments in theſe matters, without ſo due weighing things as the matter required, or having not ſo early a proſpect of the evils which experience hath ſince let us ſee following thereupon.

In the firſt *Parliament* of King *Edw.* 6. the firſt *Statute* tells us, that before that time (in the times of Popery) they had ſeveral Forms, one uſed at *Sarum*, another at *Bangor*, &c. and the whole Miniſtry of the Nation were juſt come out of *Popery*, and neither fit to *Pray* nor *Preach*, which was the reaſon both of that eſtabliſhment, and alſo of the *Book of Homilies*, and of the *Original* cauſe of that *Impoſition* on the Miniſtry, *not to preach without licenſe*. For the truth is, hardly one of an hundred of the *Prieſts* newly proſelyted from *Popery*, were fit to Preach at all, which made our *Rulers* reſtrain *Preaching* only to ſuch as ſhould be licenſed. Beſides, that there was juſt reaſon to fear that thoſe *Prieſts* but for ſuch a *Law*, and ſuch a *Book*, would have returned to their former *Maſs-ſervice*. To pre-

sent which the Book was provided, 2 & 3 Edw. 6. and corrected 5 & 6 Edw. 6. And all Ministers injoin'd by Statute to *read those Prayers*, and all the people to *hear them*. There was before that time no *Nonconformist* to direct the Act against, only *Papists*.

But upon the second *Edition* of the *Common-Prayer* there appeared a considerable party, who opposed themselves to it. Three years before, Bishop *Hooper* and Mr. *Rogers* had declared themselves against some *Rites* and *Ceremonies*. But the last year of *Edw.* 6. was the first time we read of any opposition to the *Common Prayer*, and the contest was quickly at an end by the coming in of Q. *Mary*.

The business of *Church-Government* as to the rules of it, was left by King *Edward* undetermined: for he died before he had given his *Royal sanction* to that *Systeme* of *Ecclesiastical Laws* which was drawn up by Archbishop *Cranmer* and others, by vertue of his *Commission* directed to them in the fifth year of his Reign.

In all his time no *Subscription* was required by *Statute* or *Canon* (that I can find) established by his authority under the broad Seal, either to the *Articles of Faith*, or to the Book of *Common-Prayer*, &c. nor do I read of one Minister *silenced*, or *suspended* upon any such account, or any people vexed for *Nonconformity*.

Our prudent *Reformers* knowing they had to do with a people who were *Papists* the other day, in their first *Common Prayer-Book* varied as little as they could from the *Popish Missal*, and kept as many of the *Ceremonies* as they conceived were consistent with any degree of *Reformation*. In the second *Common-Prayer-Book* they varied *more*; but yet we are assured by Dr. *Fuller* in his *Church-History*, Lib. 7. that *the party now disaffected to the Liturgy became very considerable*. This was in the very beginning of the *Reformation*, *Anno* 1553.

Queen *Mary* succeeding, put an end to all these contests in *England* for the whole time of her Reign, which was but five years. To avoid her Persecution, multitudes fled beyond the Seas, fixing some at *Basil*, some at *Geneva*, some at *Strasburgh*, some at *Embden*, some at *Francfort*, and other places.

We have no account, that I know, how those governed themselves as to Religious matters, who fixed at any of those places, save only at *Francfort* and *Geneva*; those at *Geneva* followed the *Order of that Church*, so did those at *Francfort*, using the order at *Geneva* from *June* 27. 1554. to *Mar.* 13. 1555. when Dr. *Cox* (one of those who had compiled our *English* Common Prayer Book, and was

mightily

mightily in love with his own labours) came over with a new party from *England*, and by his arts got admission into the Church at *Francfort*, and brought in the *English* Book amongst them; nor did this satisfie him, but he must also turn out their Pastor Mr. *Knox*; and that not from his charge only, but out of *Francfort*, procuring him (by some of his party) to be accused to the *Senate* for a *Sermon* he had two years before Preached in *Buckinghamshire* here in *England*, in which he had some passages reflecting upon the *Emperour* of *Germany* as an *Idolater*, &c. which made some of the *Senate* advise him to leave the City, because the *Imperial* Court was then at *Ausburgh*; and if this malicious party had carried an accusation against him thither, and the *Emperour* should require the City to deliver him as a *Traytor* to him, they could not refuse him. Which made Mr. *Knox* and a considerable party of that Church remove to *Geneva*. *This was the first fruits of the conformable mens kindness to poor Dissenters, though at that time they were both parties voluntary Exiles in a strange Land for the common Cause of Religion.* So that Dr. *Cox*, who was afterward *Bishop of Ely*; and *Horne*, who was afterwards made Bishop of *Winchester*, were left in possession of that Church, and there performed their Devotions by the *English Common Prayer Book*, which at that time had had but the establishment of one year before it was thrown out for the *Mass* in *England*.

See the Troubles at Francfort, p. 44, 45.

Queen *Elizabeth* came to the Crown Three years after this, in the year 1558. Upon which, the *banished* from all parts returned, both those who had fled from King *Hen* 8. persecution, for the *Six Articles*, who if any of them returned before, were driven back again; and those who fled from *Queen Maries* persecution, from 1553. to 1558. These (if we may believe Bishop *Bancroft* and Dr. *Fuller*) having beyond Sea sucked in the *Protestant principles* for *Worship* as well as *Discipline*, were the Fathers of *Nonconformity* in *England*. But these were either many more than I could ever find *registred*, or else under both *persecutions* multitudes must lye hid in *England*. And indeed some make the cause of the *different apprehensions* in *Protestants* at that time to lye here; That those most favourable to *Conformity*, and *promoters* of it, were such as had never been abroad, but during both those *persecutions*, weathered the storm in *England*; and the *Nonconformists*, such as had been abroad, and seen the *Worship*, *Order* and *Discipline* of the Churches in *Switzerland*, and *Germany*,

many, and at *Geneva*. But this is not Universally true; for both Dr. *Cox* and Mr. *Horne* were at *Francfort*, yet high enough for our *Conformity*, both during their abode there, and after their return into *England*.

In the first year of *Queen Elizabeth* several *Acts* passed, which revived the *Reformation*, Uniting the *Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction* to the Crown, Repealing Queen *Maries Act of Repeal*, and reviving several *Statutes* for the *Reformation* made in the time of *Hen.* 8. and *Edw.* 6. establishing *Uniformity* of *Prayers*. And it is to be noted, that these *Acts* passed without the *assent* of one *Bishop*: there were at this time but Fourteen present, and they were all *Papists*, and notorious *Dissenters* from all *Acts* of this nature. This by the way may let my *Reader* understand the *Popish design* of a *party* amongst us, for whom it is not enough that the *Clergy* be owned as one of the *Three Estates of the Realm* (of which the King is the Head) but they will also have them to be one of the *Three States in Parliament*; which if they be, no Law can be of force that wants the consent of some of them. So that if that notion were yeilded, *all our Acts for Reformation* must be concluded *Nullities*.

It was the second year of the *Queen* before we had a set of *Protestant Bishops*. It was her *Majesties* interest at that time, so to govern her self, as to caray an equal hand to all *Protestants*; accordingly she fill'd up the *Bishopricks*, partly with men that during the late persecutions had staid in *England*; partly of such as had fled beyond the Seas.

1. *Mathew Parker*, *Archbishop* of *Canterbury*——he had lived a private life in *England*.
2. *Edward Grindall*, Bishop of *London*.
3. *Robert Horne*, Bishop of *Winchester*.
4. *Richard Cox*, Bishop of *Ely*.
5. *Edward Sands*, Bishop of *Worcester*.
6. *John Jewel*, Bishop of *Salisbury*.
7. *Tho. Beatham*, B of *Coventry* and *Litchfield*.
8. *John Parkhurst*, Bishop of *Norwich*.

These, if no more, had been Exiles.

9. *Rowland*

9. *Rowland Meyrick*, Bishop of *Bangor*,
10. *Nicholas Bullingham*, Bishop of *Lincoln*.
11. *Thomas Young*, Bishop of St. *Davids*.
12. *Richard Davyes*, Bishop of *Asaph*.
13. *Gilbert Barclay*, Bishop of *Bath* and *Wells*.
14. *Edmond Guest*, Bishop of *Rochester*.
15. *William Alley* Bishop of *Exeter*.
16. *Edmond Scamler*, Bishop of *Peterborough*.
17. *Richard Cheyney*, Bishop of *Gloceſter*.
18. *Thomas Young*, Archbiſhop of *York*.
19. *James Pilkington*, Biſhop of *Durham*.
20. *John Beſt*, Biſhop of *Carliſle*.
21. *George Downham*, Biſhop of *Cheſter*.

Whether theſe had been beyond Sea, during the perſecution, I cannot tell.

The other Biſhopricks were either detained in the *Queens* hands, or held in *Commendam*. Theſe men were all of them *Conformiſts*, but ſome of them knew the heart of *Sufferers for their conſciences towards God*, for themſelves had been ſuch; indeed they generally had been ſo, though in different degrees. This temper of theſe *Biſhops* gave that party much quiet for ſeveral years, who could not agree to the *Liturgy and Ceremonies*. I find a very large Petition preſented by multitudes to the *Queen*, *Anno* 1561. which was the Third year of her Reign, in Three or Four Sheets *M. S.* where they complain of *inſufficient* and *ſcandalous Miniſters*, of *Pluraliſts*, and *Non-reſidents*, and *Lawyers* being Miniſters, but I find not the leaſt complaint of any *ſuſpended*, *deprived*, &c.

Yet even at the firſt I find Mr. *Coverdale* refuſing to be reſtored to his *Biſhoprick* of *Exeter*, and *Reverend Gilpen* refuſing the *Biſhoprick of Carliſle*.

But no *Subſcription* was yet required to any thing, by any Legal Authority; nor was the uſe of all the *Common-Prayer-Book*, or an *exact obſervance of the Ceremonies*, generally urged. This kept all in quiet ſome years: the people enjoyed the labours of their godly Miniſters: the Miniſters at that time ſcrupled not to uſe ſome parts of the *Common-Prayer*: the *Biſhops* did not exact their uſe of the more offenſive parts of it, nor of the *Ceremonies*: ſome particular *Officials* were a little buſie, and ſome few, very few men were ſufferers by them: but the body of the Nonconforming Miniſters and people were much quiet, until not only Arch-Biſhop *Parker* was dead, but Biſhop *Grindall* alſo, who ſucceeded him in that, who died about 1583. about the 25*th* of the *Queen*.

In

In the year 1583. Dr. *John Whitgift* came to be Archbishop of *Canterbury*.

The first I read of, as to Subscriptions and Nonconformity, was when the *Subscription* to the 39 Articles, which were made by the Convocation 1562. but not confirmed by *Parliament* until the year 1572. (which was the 13*th* Eliz.) and then only required to be subscribed by such as were to be admitted to Livings: and that no further than so far *as concerned matters of Faith and the Doctrine of the Sacraments*, was exacted from all Ministers.

After the agreement in them by the *Convocation*, 1562. several *Bishops* without any Authority from *Parliament*, imposed a *Subscription* to the whole number of them upon all Ministers in their Dioceses; the refusal of which caused the sufferings of seveaal particular men. *John Fox* being required to Subscribe, pulled out his *Greek Testament*, and plainly told the *Archbishop, he would Subscribe to nothing but that*; but yet such was the gravity of the man, such his *Eminency* for his *service to the Church*, that he was let alone.

The famous *Laurence Humfry*, and *Anthony Gilby*, and some others appeared *Nonconformists*.

Betwixt 1563. and 1583. also (especially in the latter part of that time) the Bishops began to press a *Subscription* to Two *Articles more*, the one *to acknowledg* the *Queens Supremacy*: that none denied, or as good as none: the other was, *that the Common-Prayer-Book, the Books of Homilies*, and *the Book of ordering Bishops, Priests and Deacons, contained in them nothing contrary to the Word of God.* To this day there is no *Book* of *Canons* confirmed by *Parliament* that requireth any such thing: but I cannot find that there was any *Canon* about these things, that had King *Edward's*, or Queen *Elizabeths* assent notified under the *Broad Seal*, so as it could pretend to any Legal establishment.

But the *Bishops* of that Age were adventuring to establish these things upon their own Authority, directly contrary to the Statute 25. *Henry* 8. which restrained them from putting any *Canons in use, to be made after that time, unless they first had the Kings Assent.*

The *Oath of Supremacy* was indeed established by Act 1*st*. *Eliz.* but a *Subscription* was not. The use of the *Common-Prayer* was commanded by an Act 1*st Eliz.* but a *Subscription, that that there was nothing in it, nor in the Homilies, nor in the Book of Ordering Bishops, Priests and Deacons*, contrary to the Word of God, under a penalty of *suspension* or *Deprivation*, was not. And the question so often

often put to them by the *Biſhops*, *Will you uſe that which you will not ſubſcribe to, that it contains nothing repugnant to Gods word?* is eaſily anſwered: There was a great part of the Book (*viz.* the *Rubricks*) that were not to be uſed in God's Worſhip. Nor did they uſe it all, but ſome part of it, which was not offenſive to them and other good people.

But altho' many ſuffered upon this *new impoſition* after *Whitgift* came to be a conſiderable figure in the Church; yet the great ſhock was after that he came (upon the death of *Grindal*) to be *Archbiſhop of Canterbury*, which was about the year 1583. and the firſt conſiderable *Nonconformity* of *Miniſters in England* is to be dated from this time.

Some ſeparation there was before this time: For *Biſhop Bancroft* in his *Dangerous Poſitions* tells us, *That within the ten or eleven firſt years of the Queens reign, many of the people ſeparated, meeting in woods and fields.* But their numbers were not valuable, nor their perſons much conſiderable; they were generally as ſheep without a Shepherd, few or no Miniſters being amongſt them, at leaſt of any note or authority, to give them any great name or repute.

The Author of the Book entituled, *The unlawful practices of the Prelates*, which was wrote about that time, tells us, That as to *Proteſtant Diſſenters, the Queen had a moſt peaceable Government for the firſt twenty four years of her reign. Towards ſome particular good men, ſome hard dealings were ſhewed here and there, by the inſtigation of ſome ignorant and half Popiſh perſons, for lack of judgment and knowledg.*

That which poſſibly gave occaſion to this activity of the Biſhops, were two ſorts of Diſſenters which they obſerved amongſt the Miniſters.

Some who only diſſented as to the *Common-prayer-book* and *Ceremonies*, of which number were Mr. *Field*, Mr. *Wilcox*, Mr. *Standon*, Mr. *Boxham*, Mr. *Saintcloe*, Mr. *Clare*, Mr. *Edmonds*. Others that were alſo for the *Reformation of Diſcipline*, amongſt whom were Mr. *Clark*, Mr. *Travers*, Mr. *Barber*, Mr. *Gardner*, Mr. *Cheſton*, Mr. *Crook*, Mr. *Egerton*, who were all betrayed by one Mr. *Johnſon* who was wont to meet with them, and many of them moſt miſerably treated in the High Commiſſion upon it.

A great noiſe was made of the election of a *Presbytery* at *Wandſworth* in *Surry*, the meaning of which was no more than this. The *Queens* and the *Biſhops* Orders extending no further to the trial and

 fit-

fitness of Communicants, than if they could say the *Creed*, the *Lords Prayer*, and the *Ten Commandments* (all which might be done by one so ignorant, that no Minister who regarded what he did, could administer the Lords Supper unto) some Ministers did agree of a stricter examination, and the people made choice of ten or eleven persons to be present at that action. Possibly it had been less exposed to scandal, if instead of them, two or three Ministers had so joined, and the end as well obtained; but surely this was a far lesser evil, than the admitting of all to the Sacrament that could but rehearse the *Creed*, *Lords Prayer*, and *Ten Commandments*; there was nothing in this action, but any pious Ministers who *are the stewards of the mysteries of God*, might answer with a safe conscience; for of *Stewards it is required that they should be faithful*, saith the Apostle; and I believe any Bishop would have judged his Steward unfaithful, if he had dealt out his Master's goods contrary to his Master's order. The Ministers Master's order is plain enough, that the holy Sacrament belongs not either to *ignorant* or scandalous persons. All the Churches of God in all Ages agree this, our own Church in her principles agreeth it; yet in practice, all Ministers were tyed to give the Sacrament (as in times of *Popery*) to all such as could but rehearse the *Creed*, the *Pater Noster*, and the Ten *Commandments*, and confessed in *Lent*; those eminent persons who were commissionated by *Edw.* 6. to draw up a new body of *Ecclesiastical Laws* (though that excellent *Prince* lived not long enough to set his Hand and Seal to it, so as what they had done had no legal force) had expressly determined, *Tit. de Sacramentis, Cap.* 5.

We will have none admitted to the Table of the Lord, until in the Church he hath made profession of his faith.

What should good Ministers do in this case? they could act but *precariously*; it seems at *Wandsworth* in *Surry*, there was a people that voluntarily submitted to this; what harm was this to the Bishops?

But the truth is, this business of *discipline* came into very little debate before 1584. after that Subscription had been so fatally imposed.

In several *Dioceses* I perceive there were some circumstantial variations in the forms of *Subscriptions*. To let my *Reader* therefore know what it was, I will give it him as it lieth in the *36th Canon*, 1603. when it first received any thing like a *legal confirmation*, which was at least 25. or 26. years after it was first devised, and full 30. years after it was so rigorously pressed.

1. Art.

1. Art. *That the Queens Majeſty, under God, is the Supreme Governour of this Realm, and of all other her Highneſſes Dominions, and Territories, as well in all Spiritual or Eccleſiaſtical things or cauſes, as Temporal; and that no forreign Prince, Perſon, State or Potentate, hath, or ought to have any Juriſdiction, Power, Superiority, or Preheminence, or Authority, Eccleſiaſtical or Spiritual, within her Majeſties Realms, Dominions or Countries.*

2. Art. *That he alloweth the Book of Articles, agreed on by the Archbiſhops and Biſhops of both Provinces, and the whole Clergy, in the Convocation holden at* London, 1562. *and that he acknowledgeth* All *and* Every *the Articles therein, being in number 39. beſides the Ratification, to be* agreeable *to the Word of God.*

3. Art. *That the Book of Common-Prayer, and of ordering Biſhops, Prieſts and Deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the Word of God, and that it may lawfully be uſed. and that he himſelf will uſe the form in the ſaid Book, preſcribed in publick Prayer and Adminiſtration of the Sacraments, and no other.*

This Engine was firſt formed by the *Archbiſhop Whitgift*, and was one of thoſe 16. *Propoſals* he offered to the *Queen*, for the ſetling of the Church (a Copy of which in *M. S.* with two Anſwers to them, I have read,) ſome little difference there was in the *Archbiſhops* form: His firſt Article was,

1. Art. *That the Authority which is given her Majeſty, in Cauſes Eccleſiaſtical, by the Laws of the Land, is lawful, and according to the Word of God.*

The Second Article was his Third, and ran thus:

2. Art. *That he allowed the Book of Articles of Religion, agreed on by the Archbiſhops and Biſhops of both Provinces, and the whole Clergy in the Convocation holden at* London 1562. *and ſet forth by her Majeſties Authority, and that he agreeth the Articles therein contained, to be agreeable to the Word of God.*

3. Art. (Which was the *Archbiſhops* Second) was word for word the ſame.

This Motion of the *Archbiſhops* put the *Queen* upon adding force to the *Impoſition*, which indeed had been by ſome *Biſhops* began before, but now in moſt Dioceſſes it was rigorouſly preſſed. The iſſue of this is told us by the *Author* of the *unlawful practices of Prelates in theſe words:*

Whatsoever was required in Civil Causes, either that concerned her Majesty, or the State, was by the Ministers embraced wholly and freely. In Ecclesiastical Causes also, whatsoever concerned Doctrine, or otherwise, was expresly required by Statute for Subscription. Thus far at the first all men with protestation offered, but to yeild to this thing, so strange and new, without any Law *in streighter sort than ever was required.* That all things were agreeable to Gods Word, and not against it; not only tollerable but allowable, both in the Book of Common Prayer, and in the Book of ordering Bishops, Priests and Deacons. *This was refused, divers of the Ministers were* suspended, *multitudes were thrust out.*

How many *godly*, able, painful Ministers were outed all over *England*, I cannot tell, but *ex ungue Leonem*, I have seen a *M. S.* which gives an account of the names of *Sixty* odd in *Suffolk*, *Twenty one* in *Lincolnshire*, *Sixty four* in *Norfolk*, *Thirty eight* in *Essex*; which though they seem comparatively few, yet are a great many when we consider that in *Essex*, at that time, there was an account given of 163. Ministers that never *Preach'd*, only *read Prayers and Homilies*, and 85. more, *Pluralists*, *Non residents*, or persons most *notoriously debaucht*.

This was the first fruit of that *Archbishops* preferment, and a fair offer at the rooting out of the *reformed Religion* as soon as planted, which never did, nor ever will live and flourish in any place, under the conduct of an *ignorant*, *debauched*, *unpreaching Ministry*; such a Ministry, much better serving *Papish* than *Protestant* purposes.

What the Ministers that were suspended, or deprived did, to prevent their misery; or to get this severity a little mitigated and allayed at this time, in the years 1583, 1584 1585. I shall inform the world from the worthy Author of the Book aforementioned, wrote at that very time, and often quoted by Bishop *Bancroft*.

His words are these:

The Cause was general, means were made, Ministers presented Doubts, Protestations, Supplications; *they were repulsed, reviled, threatned; the Ministers did indure, sustained with a good Conscience; but their miserable flocks were subject to all disorders, spoils, havock: Good men mourned, evil men prevailed, License possessed all places, nothing was reserved whole to civil and modest life. These things Gentlemen of all sorts took to heart, they lamented their own*

estate,

estate, and the estate of the people, they pitied their Ministers, their Wives and Children; Gods Cause moved them, the honour of the Gospel drew them, yea the safety of her Majesty in these dangerous times compelled them, their own Offices of Justice, which by the word was so well aided, and which without it they could not steer in a storm of so great confusion, drew them to sue in all humble sort to the Archbishop, *testifying the wholesome Doctrine, together with the honest life of their Pastors, declaring the breaches, waste and wrecks of their Country, the present evil, the dangers to come; finally craving, that in regard of the souls of the people, and their own, he would accept such a Subscription as the Law expresly appointed* [13. Eliz. c. 12.] *and restore the poor men both to their Preaching and Livings. This second means prevail'd with him* [*Archbishop* Whitgift] *no more than the first. The third was attempted.*

This refuge was to the Honourable Senate of her Majesties Privy-Council. There it was in like manner sought, and declared, the proceedings before used with the Archbishop. *The inconveniency by this new dealing sprang up in the Church and Commonwealth, was shewed, and witnessed by Subscribed Hands. These supplications, with Letters of favour were sent to the* Archbishop, *in the behalf of Preachers; did he yet any thing relent? surely no, nay, I would he had not been more indurate. Six or Eight months were thus spent, the Country devoid of Preaching, the calamities of some Shires increased, testimonies, informations, multiplied. At the length, such were the complaints, that her Majesties most* Honourable Council *dealt very feelingly in the case.*

Left any should traduce that Book as giving a false account, I could out of a *MS.* in my hands, fill a competent *Volume* with Copies of *Supplications* of this nature. It shall suffice to give an instance or two. 1. Of the *Ministers Applications* to *Archbishop Whitgift.* 2. The *peoples*, and several *Gentlemens* applications and supplications to the *Archbishop*; then 3. To the *Council.* Letters from *Noblemen* and *Privy-Councellors* to the *Archbishop*, &c.

That of the Ministers of the *Diocess* of *Ely*, is one of the shortest; I shall therefore transcribe that for a specimen of Applications to the *Archbishop.*

Whereas two Canonical Admonitions upon our obedience, are already past (most Reverend Father in God) and suspension ready to proceed against

against us for not subscribing to some things we know not, and others that we greatly doubt of: We having received good hope upon our own knowledg of your Lordships wonted hatred of sin, and love of true Religion and godliness, are bold to offer our humble supplication unto you, as well to shew our obedience to all superiority over us in the Lord, as also to crave your Lordships lawful favour for larger space of time to be granted to us, considering how carefully we have used our Ministry to the building of the Church, endeavouring with all our hearts to keep the good peace thereof, which we daily pray for: Wherefore if it shall please your Lordship to deal so graciously with us, as either to free us from all subscriptions, saving to her Majesties authority, and the Articles of the Christian Religion, which the Law requireth; or to give us so long time, as divers Treatises may be perused by us, that either we may be satisfied in our persuasions to subscribe, or (if there be no remedy) quietly to give place to the peace of the Church. In the mean time we judg them not that have subscribed, as we desire not to be judged in this our staying. Thus if it shall please Almighty God to move your Lordship to take compassion on our troubled consciences, that we may feel our burden lighter by your good favour, we shall praise God for the same, and shew our thankfulness to your Lordship, which we pray God to preserve and keep to the good and benefit of his Church, and to your own comfort.

12. March 1583. Your Graces most humble,

Robert Garret *Bowter.* *Martin.*
Henry Dickenson. *Mat. Chapman.* *Edw. Brain.*
Christopher Jackson. *Thomas Brain.*

Many Supplications of this nature were in that and in the two following years presented to the Archbishop, to particular Bishops of Dioceses, *&c.* which I forbear to transcribe, the matter being much the same.

These not finding their due effect, the Gentlemen of several Counties petitioned the *Archbishop*. I could insert several Copies; I shall only insert that of the *Gentlemen* in *Cambridgshire* to the *Archbishop*, bearing date the 26. of *April*, 1583.

May

May it please your Lordship, that under your good favour we whose names are underwriten may be acceptable suitors on the behalf of divers godly Ministers within this County of Cambridg, whose names are set down in a Schedule herewith sent unto you, concerning the manner of subscribing to the articles lately published, the execution whereof towards our Ministers, we fear would be to the displacing of them, as some are already, whereby we think great inconvenience must follow in these parts, by reason that both the sufficiency and good conversation of those already placed, with the good success and blessing on their labours, is evidently known unto us, and we are persuaded that they continue their places by bond in conscience, for that hitherto we have not heard of any contentiousness in Religion, or disquietness and disorder in any of them or their people: Wherefore altho in your wise and fatherly care, your desire is to make choice of a good supply if these fail; yet if it should seem good unto your Wisdom, we should acknowledg our selves much bound unto your Lordship in the continuance of these men, being known unto us already; the other hereafter to come being unknown what they shall be; and so much the rather, because of the bare Livings which some of them have, whereby it is to be feared it will be no easie matter to place sufficient men in their stead. Thus trusting, and nothing doubting but that they may find your honourable favour so far forth as you may grant, not contrary to the Law of this Realm; and most humbly beseeching, that we may enjoy them in their rooms as long as any others in other places; whereof we and they hope so much the more, for that it pleased God once to make your Lordship a special member in this County for a time, whereby as you gave and bestowed a great cause of love, so you reaped much good will; which as it remaineth in us and them to stand you in any stead to our powers, so we trust that we and they shall find this latter fruit of it, to our great comfort and benefit: and thus we humbly take our leave.

Your Graces assured,

John Cutts. *Fitzralph Chamblein.*
Fr. Hind. *Thomas Wendy.*
John Hutton. *Thomas Chickly.*
Anthony Cage.

Some

Some others there were of this nature; but it seemed [illegible]h by what followed, and also by what the Author of the Book aforementioned saith, that the *Archbishops* ear was deaf to all Supplications of this nature, and has resolved to carry his Subscription through.

The poor Ministers in this distress, together also with the Gentlemen of several Counties, and the people of several places, addressed themselves by *Petition* to the *Queen*, and to particular Lords of the Council, then to the Queen and the whole Council. Particularly, *Dunmow* in *Essex* sent a *Supplication* to my Lord *Rich*. The Parishioners of *Aldermary* in *London*, to the Earl of *Leicester*. The Ministers of the Dioces of *Peterborough*, to another Lord. Many addressed to the whole Council, *viz.* The Gentlemen of *Norfolk*, the Ministers in *Norfolk*, the Ministers of *Essex*, the Ministers of *Lincolnshire*. *Essex*, *Oxfordshire*, the *Isle of Ely*, and many other Counties and places. I have by me all the Copies; I shall only transcribe that of the Ministers of *Lincolnshire*.

The Supplication of the Ministers of *Lincolnshire* to the Lords of the Council.

FOr asmuch (Right Honourable) *as the Lord of heaven and earth hath substituted your* Honours *next under her Majesty, to procure passage to his Gospel, beauty to his Church, and glory to his Kingdom; in which business of the Lord, to the great joy of all those which pray heartily for the peace of* Jerusalem, *hitherto you have happily proceeded: We whose names are underwritten, whom the same Lord hath in mercy placed over some of his people here in* Lincolnshire, *as Pastors and Preachers to feed them with the word of truth, do humbly beseech your Honours to regard the pitiful and woful estate of our Congregations and people in these parts, which being destitute of our Ministry by the means of a Subscription generally and strictly urged now of late by the Bishops Officers, do mourn and lament. It is well known to all your* Lordships, *that an* absolute Subscription *is required throughout the whole* Province *of* Canterbury *to three Articles. The first concerning her* Majesties Supreme Authority. *The second to the Book of Common-prayer, with that of consecrating Bishops, and ordering Priests and Deacons. The third concerning the*

Book

Book of Articles. As touching the firſt, we offer our ſelves to a full Subſcription, *as always heretofore we have done; as alſo to the Articles of Religion* [I preſume here muſt be meant, as in the reſt generally is expreſt, ſo far as they concern matters of Faith, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments,] *and cannot be accepted herein, without an abſolute Subſcribing to the other, unto which we dare not condeſcend, being as yet many of us not fully acquainted with the Book of* conſecrating Biſhops, and ordering Prieſts and Deacons; *and all of us unreſolved, and unſatisfied in our Conſciences,* in many points of the Common-Prayer. *May it pleaſe your Lordſhips alſo, favourably to conſider, that in refuſing an abſolute Subſcription, we do it not out of any arrogance, or ſingularity, but only for that we have no ſufficient reſolution, which we have earneſtly deſired of ſome doubts, about divers weighty matters, and points in the ſame Book; which requeſts of ours, ſith we could not obtain, we deſired, that at the leaſt in our* Subſcription, *we might make exceptions of the things whereof we doubted, which they have utterly denied us, for which cauſes* (Right Honourable!) *we fearing to Subſcribe ſo abſolutely as we were urged, we are all ſuſpended from executing the function of our Miniſtry amongſt our people, to the great danger of their ſouls, and danger of loſing the fruit of our former poor labours, which we have by Gods Grace imployed upon them: wherefore we humbly crave of your* Honours *(our Cauſe being, as we are perſwaded, the Lords own Cauſe, and his Churches) that it may be conſidered: And that ſince we can neither be impeached of falſe Doctrine, nor of contempt of her Majeſties Laws, nor of refuſing of the exerciſing of the Book of* Common-Prayer *in our charges, nor of breeding contention and ſedition in the Church: And again, that Papiſts, her Majeſties enemies, with Atheiſts, to the corrupting of Religion in Doctrine and Manners, do daily multiply and increaſe, we may be reſtored to our flocks and people, in ſuch ſort, as with all peace of Conſcience we may go forward with the Lords Work in building up his houſe in ſeveral places.*

Thomas Fulkeck.	Shepheard.	John Munning.
Hugh Tuke.	Henry Nelſon.	Humfrid Travers.
John Daniel.	Mat. Tomſon.	John Pryer.
Richard Allen.	Thomas Bradly.	John Summerſcales.
Anthony Hunt.	Joſeph Gibſon.	John Wintle.
Reinold Grome.	James Worſhip.	Richard Holdſworth.
Thomas Tripler.	Charles Bingam.	Richard Kellet.

These are enough for specimens of several sorts of Supplications. There were others more particularly directed to the *Queen*, and to some great persons, all much to the same sense.

This last means had some little effect: of which the Author of the Book called *The unlawful practices of Prelates*, giveth us this account, *c.* 4.

Hence became the subscription to be somewhat more tolerable, and further time was granted unto divers in divers Countreys, and retaining that which pertained to the Civil State, and in the Ecclesiastical that which concerned doctrine, with protestation to use the Book of Common-prayer, the Archbishop suffered himself to be entreated to require no more of many. To this many were drawn: the peace of the Church, the compassion of their flocks, the wearinesse of turmoils, brought many to it, that yet did it, some with tears, some with so great heavinesse of conscience long after, as they were never quiet till their dying day. So great a desire of unity was in sundry men that stood herein. Others satisfying themselves with a protestation of an holy and godly resolution by the Archbishop, *and other of the Bishops, in certain points (as they supposed) by the example of certain learned men in the like case, did not refuse to subscribe, as the Ministers of* Sussex, *and such like. Again, some other special men were admitted in divers places with more favour, as the Ministers of* Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire, *and some other places, and some such others (chiefly such whose authority would have brought discredit to their too too severe proceedings) without any subscription at all.*

Hence, of the multitude that held out, at first seemed not so great (tho in truth in respect of the men, and the times, they were too too many) and their subscription *laid with their* sundry exceptions in a manner no subscription at all. *But with the credit of these, shewing only the subscriptions in one paper, and retaining their* Protestation *in another, many were drawn also as unawares birds into the net, by the chirping of birds first taken. From the colour of these last* forms of subscriptions, *sprang bruits, as tho all things were well in the* Orders and Liturgy of the Church of England; *all things subscribed unto; that all had yielded; that whosoever mouths were open, had subscribed. But how far these differ frow that which was at first tendered, I suppose no man is ignorant. As again, how little difference there is between the latter, and that which all men did freely and frankly offer*

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fer at the firſt. Nothing that did pertain to her Excellent Majeſty *was ſtruck at; nothing that concerned doctrine, or the ſubſtance of our faith. Nothing that in the Statutes was ſet down touching* Subſcription.

The moſt that was excepted againſt at firſt, and that generally, were the *Ceremonies*, *The reading the Apocryphal Books*, *The ill tranſlation of the Scriptures uſed*, *The Rubricks*, *Very many things in the Book of ordaining Biſhops*, *Prieſts*, *and Deacons*, and ſeveral *paſſages in the prayers*. The number was not many, who refuſed to uſe a *ſet-form of prayer* to be conſtantly uſed in their Miniſtry.

It was but twenty five years ſince the whole Nation came out of *Popery*, where they knew nothing elſe; and it could not be expected that in that time ſhould be a diſcovery of all that was truly blameable in *Worſhip*, or *Government of the Church*. Yet there were ſome that in thoſe days refuſed this. Biſhop *Bancroft* in his *Dangerous Poſitions*, p. 84 tells us, that Mr. *Field* in a Letter to Mr. *Aſker*, 14 *Ap.* 1585. tells him:

I preach every Sabbath-day, (if no other that cometh by chance doth ſupply the place) having nothing to do at all with the former Book of Common-prayer, &c.

This was the firſt diviſion of godly Miniſters into ſuch as were *purely Nonconformiſts*. 2. *Conforming Nonconformiſts*. The latter were the greater number, who had ſubſcribed to *uſe the Common-prayer*, but not to *read it fully and in all parts*; and this with *proteſtations*, that their *ſubſcriptions* ſhould not oblige them to do any thing contrary to the word of God, *&c.* there were ſeveral forms of it.

Twenty Miniſters of the *Dioceſs of Chicheſter* thus ſubſcribed, with *exception* to all the *Rubricks*, the *Book of Ordination*, and I know not how many limitations.

Here the great and infinite wiſdom of God was ſeen, governing the failers of his ſervants to his own *wiſe ends and glory*. By this means a *preaching Miniſtry* was preſerved in *England*, which had the *Biſhop* kept to his firſt ſeverity, and all the Miniſters that at firſt refuſed, abſolutely perſiſted in their refuſal, had before the Reformation was 28. years old, been deſtroyed throughout *England*, at leaſt the greateſt part of it.

But (saith our Saviour) *He that will save his life shall lose it.* Very many of these good men were afterwards *suspended, deprived, indited, imprisoned, wearied* out of their lives by troubles in the *High Commission*; though not for *not subscribing* (for which was no Law) yet for *not wearing the Surplice*, not *using the Cross in Baptism*, not *keeping Holydays*, not *reading all the Prayers*, or some such like things. Thus was our state from 1583. till 1603. when King *James* came to the Crown.

Hitherto I have shewed my *Reader* the first *Impositions* in *England*, and the woful mischief wrought by them, not only to multitudes of particular Families, but to the interest of the *Gospel* and *Reformation* in general.

I shall now proceed to a second period, which will take up the whole time of King *James* his Reign, from 1603. to 1625. *Whitgift* was in the beginning *Archbishop*, and *Bancroft Bishop of London*. Their Writings sufficiently testifie how zealous both of them were against *Nonconformists*. The *Convocation* this year established the three Articles (which 20 years before had made such a confusion) by a *Canon*; it is their 36 *Canon*: which *Canons* were confirmed by King *James*, but never since brought to a *Parliament*, or confirmed by them. I am not concerned to enquire how valid they are as Laws obligatory to the subject, till confirmed by *Parliament* (that belongeth to Lawyers to argue, and dependeth upon the *Kings Prerogative*, and the terms used in the Act of 25 *Hen.* 8.) I am only concerned to note how Conformity improved upon these *Canons*, and also what the effect of these new Impositions was.

For the first, let the *Canons* themselves speak. *Subscription* to the three *Articles* was now enjoined by *Canon* 36. *Bowing at the name of Jesus* was enjoined *Can* 18. *Bidding of prayer*, by another *Canon*, with a multitude of other things too long to be here recited; for which I refer my *Reader* to the Book of *Canons*.

This makes it evident, that the Conference at *Hampton*-Court, this year, was not in the name of all *Nonconformists*, but only the personal men, Noncon.

The first fruit of this was a Petition with a thousand Ministers hands, presentad to the King 1603,4. saith Dr. *Fuller*. Indeed Dr. *Fuller* saith, the hands were but 750. I believe he taketh his intelligence from the *abridgment of that Book, which the Ministers of Lincoln Diocess, delivered to his Majesty*, 5. December, 1604. I find them there mentioned to be 752. out of 23. Counties. Dr. *Fuller* saith, 25. which are but half the Counties of *England* and *Wales*, hardly so much. Their numbers are thus counted.

Act of 3 or 4

Oxford

Oxfordshire——9.	*Sussex*——47.	*Kent*——23.
Staffordshire——14.	*Leicestershire*-57.	*London*——30.
Dorsetshire——17.	*Essex*——57.	*Lincolnshire*——33.
Nottinghamshire 20.	*Cheshire*——12.	*Warwickshire*——44.
Surry——21.	*Bedfordshire*--16.	*Devon* and *Cornwall*.-51.
Norfolk——28.	*Somersetshire*-17.	*Northampton*——57.
Wiltshire——31.	*Darbyshire*—20.	*Suffolk*——72.
Buckinghamshire-33.	*Lancashire*—21.	

These make 752. Here are none reckoned of any County in *Wales*, nor any of *Yorkshire*, *Barkshire*, and many others. I know no reason any hath to doubt, but that there were a 1000. hands to this Petition; the Petitioners in the body of their Petition say, they were more than a thousand, and they would not have told a Lye to a King, which so little labour as counting them would have proved to be such.

But the matter of the Petition is very considerable, to let my *Reader* know both to what height *Impositions* were grown 77. years since, and what *Oppositions* they met with from our fore-fathers. Dr. *Fuller* in his *Church-History* assures us, he has got the true Copy, I will therefore transcribe it from him, as I find it in the *10th Book*, *p.* 22.

Most Gracious and Dread Soveraign!

Seeing it hath pleased the Divine Majesty, to the great comfort of all good Christians, to advance your Highness, *according to your just Title, to the peaceable Government of this Church, and Commonwealth of* England: *We, the Ministers of the Gospel in this Land, neither as factious men, affecting a popular parity in the Church, nor as Schismaticks, aiming at the dissolution of the State Ecclesiastical, but as the faithful Servants of Christ, and loyal Subjects to your Majesty, desiring, and longing for a Redress of divers abuses of the Church, could do no less in our obedience to God, service to your Majesty, love to his Church, than acquaint your Majesty with our particular griefs, for as your Princely Pen writeth t* The King, as a good Physician, must first know what peccant humours his Patient naturally is most subject unto, before he can begin his Cure: *And although divers of us that sue for Reformation, Subscribe to the Book, some upon* Protestation, *some upon* Exposition *given them, some with* Condition, *rather*

ther than the Church should have been deprived of their labour and Ministry; yet now we to the number of more than a thousand *of your Majesties Subjects and Ministers, all groaning as under a common burden of humane* Rites *and* Ceremonies *do with one joint consent humble our selves at your* Majesties *feet, to be eased and relieved in this behalf. Our humble suit then unto your* Majesty *is, that these offences following, some of them may be removed, some amended, some qualified.*

1. *In the Church Service,* That the Crosse in Baptism, Interrogatories ministred to Infants, *Confirmation (as superfluous) may be taken away, Baptism not to be administred by Women, and so explained. The Cap and Surplice not urged. That Examination may go before the Communion. That it may be administred with a Sermon. That divers terms of Priests, Absolution, and some others used, with the Ring in Marriage, and other such like in the Book, might be corrected. The longsomeness of Service abridged. Church-songs and Musick moderated to better edification. That the Lords day be not profaned. The rest upon Holidays not so strictly urged. That there may be an Uniformity of Doctrine prescribed, No Popish opinion any more taught or defended. No Ministers charged to teach the people to bow at the Name of Jesus. That the Canonical Scriptures only be read in the Church.*

2. Concerning Church Ministers: *That none hereafter be admited into the Ministry but able and sufficient men, and those to preach diligently, and especially upon the Lords day. That such as be already entred, and cannot Preach, may either be removed, and some charitable course taken for their relief, or else to be forced according to the value of their Livings to maintain Preachers. That non-Residency be not permitted. That King* Edwards *Statute for the lawfulness of Ministers Marriages may be revived. That Ministers be not urged to subscribe, but according to the Law, to the* Articles of Religion, *and the Kings Supremacy only.*

3. For Church-livings, and Maintenance: *That Bishops leave their Commendams, some holding Prebends, some Parsonages, some Vicarages with their* Bishopricks. *That double beneficed men be not suffered to hold, some two, some three Benefices with Cure, and some two, three or four Dignities besides. That Impropriations annexed to Bishopricks and Colledges, be demised only to* Preachers incumbent, *for th' old Rent. That the Impropriations of Lay-mens fees may be charged with a sixth or seventh part of the worth to the maintenance of the Preaching Ministers.*

4. For

4. For Church-Discipline: *That the Discipline and Excommunication may be administred according to Christs Institution, or at the least that enormities may be redressed, as namely, That Excommunication come not forth under the names of* Chancellors, Lay-persons, Officials, &c. *That men be not Excommunicated for trifles, twelve peny matters. That none be Ecommunicated without consent of his Pastor. That the Officers be not suffered to extort unreasonable fees. That none having Jurisdiction or Registers places, put out the same to farm. That divers Popish Canons as for restraint of Marriage at certain times be reversed. That the long someness of Suits in Ecclesiastical Courts which hang sometimes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 years, may be restrained. That the Oath* ex Officio, *by which men are forced to accuse themselves, be more sparingly used. That Licenses for Marriage without Banes asked, be more cautiously granted.*

These with such other abuses yet remaining, and practised in the Church of England, *we are able to shew to be not agreeable to the Scriptures, if it shall please your Highness further to hear us, or more at large to be informed, or by conference amongst the Learned to be resolved. And yet we doubt not but that your Majesty without further process, of whose Christian judgment we have received so good a taste already, is able of your self to judg of the equity of this cause; God we trust hath appointed your Highness our Physician to heal these diseases; and we say with* Mordecai *to* Esther, Who knoweth but you are come to the Kingdom for such a time? *Thus your Majesty shall do that which we are perswaded shall be acceptable to God, honourable to your Majesty in all succeeding ages, profitable to his Church, which shall be thereby increased, comfortable to your Ministers, which shall be no more suspended, silenced, disgraced, imprisoned for mens traditions; and prejudicial unto none, but those who seek their own credit, quiet and profit in the world. Thus with all dutiful submission referring our selves to your Majesties Pleasure for your Gracious answer, as God shall direct you, We most humbly recommend your* Highness *to the* Divine Majesty, *whom we beseech for Christ his sake to do herein what shall be for his glory, the good of his Church, and your endless comfort.*

Your Majesties most humble Subjects, the Ministers of the Gospel, who desire not a disorderly Innovation, but a due and Godly Reformation.

How

How his Majesty resented this Petition, is variously reported. *But sure it is* (saith *Fuller*) *it ran the Gantlop through all the* Prelatical party, *every one giving it a lash, some with their Pens, more with their tongues, and the dumb Ministers as they term it found their speech most vocal against it.*

How many the number of those was who joined in this, and several other Petitions at the same time, and were *suspended, deprived, imprisoned*, &c. I cannot tell; but a great division arose, which held during the Archbishop *Bancrofts* time. Bishop *Abbot* who succeeded him in the *Archbishoprick* of *Canterbury*, was much calmer. Several Books were wrote at this time against the *Nonconformist*, by Mr. *Hutton*, Mr. *Rogers*, Dr. *Lovel*, and Dr. *Spark*, (who had himself been a Dissenter); but in the year 1607, & 1608, they were learnedly answered by a Book of three parts, call'd, *A Defence of the Ministers Reasons for refusal of Subscription.* The first part was *concerning the holy Scriptures*; the ill Translation of several Texts. The second *concerning the Holy Scriptures and Apocrypha.* The third was *about kneeling at the Sacrament.* Several able Ministers left the Nation, many others with their Families were undone in it.

Thus Conformity stood till the time of King *Charles* the First; some *Bishops* being more, some less rigid in pressing the *Canons.* But when Archbishop *Laud* came to be Archbishop of *Canterbury*, (who succeeded *Abbot*) he made a new Edition of *Impositions*, to which he required Conformity, saying *second Service* at the *Table, setting that at the East end of the Church Altarwise, commanding the Communion-Table to be railed in, and all people to come up thither to receive the Communion kneeling*; enforcing the *bowing at the Name of Jesus. Forbidding Lectures, and Afternoon-Sermons. Pressing the Book of Sports on the Lords day. Not injoining but commending bowing toward the East-end*, &c. *and twenty more things.*

What havock these things made, is yet within the memory of many; and what disturbance Bishop *Wren* made in *Suffolk*, and other places, as several other Bishops that were his Creatures did in other Dioceses, many alive know; multitudes of Ministers were again *deprived* and *suspended.* Many undone in the *High Commission.* At last in the Convocation 1640, an *Oath* with *&c.* was devised, which had perfected the business in rooting out all Puritan Preachers, had not a *Parliament* came and spoil'd that design.

Scarce any is ignorant what numbers of Godly Ministers and people

people left the Nation upon this account, betwixt 1630. and 1640. so many as to make one of the noblest *Colonies* at this day in the world (that, I mean, of *New-England*) besides those who fled into *Holland* and *Ireland*. Many staid at home, and were miserably treated by *Courts*. Some lived privately, others in some quiet parts of the Nation kept their Station.

How little the Conformable Interest gained by this (though that Party ruined multitudes of godly people and their Families) quickly appeared in the year 1641. when the *Parliament* began to espouse their Cause, and give them liberty. The number of Ministers, favouring *Nonconformity*, presently appeared far greater than ever before; so as their adversaries had a little satisfied their lusts, and malice, but not in the least promoved their Cause. The people were more imbitter'd against them, and more enamoured upon painful godly Ministers. And the *Bishops* restraint of Preaching, did but inflame people with the desire of it. Several Noblemen and Worthy *Gentlemen* in all parts of *England* began to be awakened, as may appear by many of their excellent Speeches in the beginning of the *Parliament* 1641. They plainly saw, that through these extravagant actings, We lost many of our Eminent Ministers, multitudes of our most sober people were removed into other Countries. The Trade of the Nation was altered, much of it carried elsewhere; the people in many places turned ignorant brutes for want of Preaching; many turned *Papists*, many *Doctrines of Popery* were Published, *Colledges* were fixed for *Romish Priests*, and *Nuns* fixed, &c. a Plot laid by them against the King and Nation; they judged it high time to put an end to those practices, which had caused those disorders; and had this advantage to do it, because their Conformity, whether old or new, had no further Statutable Authority, than was given it by the *Act of Conformity*, 1 *Eliz.* and the Stat. 13 *Eliz. c.* 12. about the Articles of Faith.

Upon his *Majesties* happy *Restauration*, *Anno* 1660. all promised themselves a freedom from these evils which had troubled the Church very near 70. years, from the 13 *Eliz.* to the year 1640. though indeed in no great degree from the 13*th* to the 25*th* of *Eliz.* but for about 19. years of Queen *Elizabeths* Reign, and the whole time of King *James* his Reign (which was 21. years), and 16. years of King *Charles* his Reign, these *Impositions* were the cause almost of all the evils under which this Nation groaned.

We had reason to promise our selves this immunity from his *Majesties Declaration* at *Bredah*, and his first *Declaration about Ecclesiastical affairs*, in the year 1660. Whether the wisdom of his *Majesty*, or that party of the *House of Commons*, who then opposed the passing of it into an *Act*, were greater, let the experience now of *Twenty years* more determine, which for the most part have been years of *confusion* and *disorder*, as to matters of Religion. That failing, *Impositions* were augmented.

Upon this last attempt for settlement, *Ministers* were not only left to the Bishops power to have exacted upon them, 1. *A Subscription to the* 3. *Articles in the* 36th *Canon.* 2. *The Oath of Canonical obedience*, which though ancient, as established by Canons in times of Popery, yet we read not of, all the time of *Queen Eliz.* But 3. *They must be ordained by Bishops*, though before ordained according to the *Ordination* of all other *Reformed Churches* (which in *Queen Eliz.* time, the Statute 13 *Eliz. cap.* 12. dispensed with, and made needless. 4. They must *assent* and *consent to all and every thing in the Common-Prayer*, as *now Printed.* 5. *They must declare, renounce, and abjure:* all this over and above, being tyed to the personal reading of the *Common-Prayer*, and *use of the Ceremonies*, &c.

The effect was, the laying aside of more than 2000. Ministers. Besides the Congregations which depended on these good mens Ministry; the number of *Quakers*, who had no Ministers, and of *Pastors of Congregational Churches*, who had no Livings, but were maintained by their people, together with the people that depended on them, and the *Antipaedobaptists*, were not small, who all had an equal, if not a greater prejudice to the *Common-Prayer-Book* and *Ceremonies*, &c.

What could by any wise men be expected, but what we have seen, that in all places people should gather into *Separate Congregations?* Could it be expected, that such a vast number of Ministers, not half of which had any thing to live on but their labours to maintain themselves, Wives and Families, should quietly have sate still and never Preached (if they could have imagined, that this *humane Law* could have discharged them from any previous obligation to God), especially being importuned by the people whom God had committed to them? If any had such fancies, they were very wild ones.

In *publick Temples* they must not Preach; what remained, but their own or others *hired* houses? What would be the event of this, was quickly seen, and an *Act* provided against *Conventicles*, making the punishment, *Fines*, *Imprisonment*, *Banishment*, &c. What a stir this made, is sufficiently known. This commenced 1664. and being a temporary Act, determined 1667, or 1668. Soon after this, 1665. passed the *Act prohibiting Noncon. Ministers to inhabit in Corporations*. And the *Act about Conventicles* being expired, another *Act* was made, which took place, *Anno* 1670. How many sober Ministers and people in Eight years time had been undone, by proceedings against them in the *Ecclesiastical Courts*, *Indictments* at *Sessions* and *Assizes*, and by putting the first *Act* against *Conventicles* in *Execution*, is sufficiently known, and too large, and sad a story to relate. The new Act against *Conventicles* (and such a one as never before passed a Parliament of *England* with respect to *Magna Charta*, and the fundamental liberties of the subject) passed about 1670. Ministers and people were again prosecuted to incredible degrees, almost in all places, until his *Majesty* gave a *Writ of ease* by his *Declaration of Indulgence*, 1672. that lasted but two years; and in 1674. the storm began again, as fierce as ever, but gradually abated till the year 1677. about which time the *Parliament* began to have a *scent* of a Plot to bring in *Popery*; indeed they *scented* it first in 1673. Our worthy *Patriots* from that time stood upon their watch, something they discerned to be in hand, and that the project was deeply laid, but on what persons to charge it they knew not, and were wholly in the dark as to the *methods* and *particulars* of it, till God, in the year 1678. inclined Dr. *Oates* to do that (never to be forgotten) service to his Country, at one time saving *the Life of his Soveraign*, *the Government of the Nation*, and the *Protestant Religion*, from a total *extirpation*, and all good *Protestants* from a *Massacre*.

The eyes of all Sober persons are at length opened to see, that an *Union of Protestants* is necessary. The *Question* is, which way it shall be effected? for my own part, I should say, *any way*, by which it is practicable. There are but Two that can fall within the comprehension of any man of sense.

1. The First is by *continuance* of the *Impositions* on *Ministers and people*, rooting out all *private Meetings*, *enforcing people to come to hear the Common-Prayer*, *and to conform to the Ceremonies*, *and hear their Parish-Ministers*, *and receive the Sacrament with them*.

2. The second is by *taking off these Impositions*, which all agree to be of things not in their own nature *necessary*, but such as the Magistrate may if he pleaseth relax.

For the first *method* to unite us, it is a strange one, it aims only at *uniting* by *destroying*; and purchases such a *Church-Unity* as the *Papists* boast of, who by destroying of *hundred thousands* of righteous men, at last made all of one mind in appearance. The experience of more then 100 years hath taught us, that multitudes are neither to be *argued*, nor *cudgelled* into their *conformity*. The multitude of *Nonconformists* hath increased all a long, in stead of abateing, even from the first beginning of the difference at *Francfurt*, to this day; and he is very ignorant that knoweth not, that since the *fire* of *London*, they have been almost doubled to what they were before. Nor hath the warmth of many *Clergymen* of late, in decrying the Plot, or lessening it, and indeavouring to make people believe it was a *Nonconformist Plot*, a little contributed to let the world know what they are, and would be at. Would any have these impositions still inforced? what can they pursue, but the old design of *Reconciling* us and the *Church of Rome*, in which the *Papists* will listen to them, till they have ripen'd a design to cut their throats, as well as other mens; but those are mightily ignorant of *Popish principles*, that can so much as fancy a possibility of reconciliation with them, so long as we maintain the *Kings Supremacy*, or a *married Clergy*; so that in truth a reconciliation to the Church of *Rome*, is a thing not to be thought on by a *married Clergyman*, (unless he be weary of his wife and children) nor by a *Loyal Subject* that understands sense.

The *Union* must therefore be effected by taking off these *impositions*, which now for an hundred years have produced so ill effects in this Nation. It is easy to see how great the good of this would be. We should all then be known by the single name of *Protestants*, and be hearty as one man in opposition to all *Popish designs*. Our *Civil*, and *Ecclesiastical Courts* might possibly then be at leisure to execute the power with which they are betrusted, against *Papists* and *profane persons*. Sober and industrious men would be encouraged to *push out in trading* to their utmost. There would be no *complaining in our streets* for want of the *Ordinances of God* so administred, as that conscientious people might freely partake of them, without so much as a *fancy* that might make them call out, *Death is in the pot*, and sit at the *Lords feast* without so much as a jealousy of a *Divine*

Sword

Sword hanging over their heads, spoiling their Spiritual appetite. In short, it would restore us to one of the greatest pieces of Christian liberty, *To serve the Lord without fear*, either of offending God whom they know in matters of Worship to be a *jealous God*, or of being undone in their temporal concerns for the exercise of a *tender conscience towards God*. All good men should rejoice under the shadow of the *King* and *Parliament*, and unite their *Prayers* with chearfulness for both.

What would be the Evil of it? The foundations of *Archbishop Whitgift*, and *Archbishop Laud*, and my Lord *Chancellor Hide* (the buildings upon which, hath hitherto been kept up with no less guard than the trouble of all the Courts of *Judicature* in *England*) would be something shaken, and our foundations laid upon the word of God, which surely is far better; the credit of some men, who have laid all the stress of *Religion* upon a *Common-prayer-book* and some *Ceremonies*, would be thought a little impaired; the Magistrate should do nothing displeasing to God, who never required the imposition of these things at his hands: and doubtless hath been highly displeased at a great deal of force used, which hath not been good for the enforcing of them.

It is, as I have said before, more than an hundred years since these *impositions* have been the cause of so much evil in these Nations, and that not only to particular families and persons, but even to the *whole Nation*. Though our Civil Wars were bottomed upon *Questions* and Grievances of a *Civil Nature*: yet it is hardly imaginable the common people should have been so inflamed, had they not before been wounded in so tender a part as that of their *Consciences* towards God.

By reason of these contests, *Papists* have been connived at, and gained a great deal of Reputation, so much (that till within these 2 years) it was dangerous for *Protestants* to vie with them, for *Loyalty* or *Religion*. We see the issue, while they have been thus neglected, yea credited, they have been hatching the most hellish Plot that was ever heard of, hardly to be parallel'd by any story. The Plot hath in the bowels of it been discovered so full of *Blood*, and *Cruelty* and *Ingratude*, to his most Sacred Majesty; and in the defence of themselves from the imputation of it, they have been found guilty of so many *Lies*, so much *Perjury* and *Subornation*, so much *ungodliness* and *unrighteousness*, that they cannot but see their *Catholick Cause* is wounded under the *fifth rib*, and their *pretended Religion* not

like

like to recover its *reputation*, until there be none left of this Generation. They have nothing to do, but to wait a time when they may fight out their way with some probable hope of prevailing.

It is certainly now high time to restore all *Protestants* (be their persuasions what they will) to a just liberty in the things of God, than the want of which nothing can more dispirit good men in their duty as to a common watchfulness and defence; for what spirit can be in them who know they shall be ruin'd by one hand or another? I further offer it to the consideration of our grave *Senators*, who come up from the several parts of the *Nation*, and must best know the complexion of it, Whether those who are most against the taking of these *Impositions*, be not (I do not say all, but forty for one) the persons whom several *Proclamations of his Majesty*, and several *votes of two Parliaments* declaring it, and the *several judgments* upon some of the *Traytors* given by our *Courts of Justice*, have not been able to convince, *That there is any Popish Plot*; but in all their converse they have made it their business to *deny*, or *lessen* the Plot, to *defame* and *vilify* the *Kings Evidence*, to impose upon people that it was a *Plot* of the *Nonconformists*, to make the *dying words of the Jesuits* creditable. In short, by all manner of ways to turn the whole *Popish Plot* into *Ridicule*. I do know some few (very few others) zealots for these Impositions, have born a *Testimony* against the *Papists*, and freely declare their *Judgments* about the Plot, to the sense of the *King*, the *Parliament* and the *Judges*; but as to the generality, let observation be made, and judgment accordingly given. If it be found to be that party, they are fit only to be regarded by those who pray for the good success of that *Execrable design*, to which the continuance of these things, and a vigorous proceeding accordingly against *Nonconformists*, will as potently conduce, as it is possible any thing should.

From this short, and true account of the *rise*, and *growth*, and *effects* of these *Impositions*, a good account may be given of a late Authors *History of Separation*, the smalness of it at first, and the further increase and improvements of it, which indeed did much vary, according as *Impositions* varied, and multiplyed. Those Congregations which he calls *Separate Congregations*, were from the first of Reformation; but the numbers of them, and of the persons in them, was much increased after 1583. when *Whitgift* first brought in *Subscriptions* to *Articles*, and imposed them universally; and increased yet more in 1603. and further in *Bishop Lands* time, and were greatest

greateſt in 1662: when the greateſt number of Miniſters was thrown out and forbidden to preach in any publick Temples. Till that time *Nonconformiſt Miniſters* might preach publickly, and moſt of them did ſo in the years 1634, 1635. to 1640: which is the true reaſon that in thoſe years there were ſo few *Private meetings*, the people could in publick Temples hear their Miniſters as *Lecturers*, yet in thoſe times there were *private meetings*; and notwithſtanding all the fury ſome *Biſhops* uſed, I remember Biſhop *Hall* in a ſpeech made to the *Parliament* 1641 or 1642. complain'd of an hundred ſuch meetings to be in *London* alone.

Nor is it any wonder if in near forty years time, good people have gained a little more light in matters of *Worſhip* and *Diſcipline*, and diſcerned the unlawfulneſs of ſome things in both, which were not at that time diſcerned. The *Queſtions* relating to both, have been more ventilated ſince the year 1640. than ever they were before, ſince the Reformation. So as a telling of the world, how few *diſſenters* were at firſt, and in how few things they diſſented, is very inſignificant to any purpoſe but the loading of preſent *Diſſenters* with an *Odium* from thoſe ignorant and paſſionate perſons who do not underſtand, *That they had not half ſo much reaſon to diſſent then*, as they have had ſince, and now have; and that the preſent *Conformity* required of *Miniſters*, is twice more than was formerly required. And for the people, their *Nonconformity* in a greater degree muſt alſo be attributed to the further light they have gained as to matters of *Worſhip* and *Diſcipline*, the true *nature* and *order* of *Churches*, together with the outing of their Paſtors, they being no ſuch notions as all can ſwallow, *That the forbidding godly Miniſters to preach by an humane law, diſſolves the paſtoral relation of Paſtors to their Churches.* Or, that *all within the bounds of a pariſh, are obliged to be members of the Church in that place; or are therefore ſo, becauſe they dwell within the bounds of ſuch places.*

Some obſerve, that moſt men have ſome opportunities in their lifetime offered them by the Providence of God, which if they lay hold of, they make them happy in the good things of this life. The like fate poſſibly attends Nations.

We had one opportunity offered us in *Q. Elizabeths time*, when Reformation might have been ſettled without theſe ingrateful impoſitions. This was loſt through the fiery zeal of the then *Archbiſhop*, and brought us into near 20 years troubles. We had a ſecond in the beginning of *King James* his time; but the ſame man, and his ſucceſſor

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Archbishop *Bancroft* &c. again hindred our seeing what concerned our peace. We had a third opportunity upon his Majesties Restauration; by whose means it was then hindred, all know. We have since met with 20 years trouble more, or very nigh.

We have a fourth before us at this time, upon the discovery of this *Execrable Popish Plot*. When God calleth us under the penalty of all that is dear unto us, to seek peace amongst our selves, (for our Saviour hath told us, A *Kingdom divided against it self cannot stand*). All other proposals for Union, but the abating those *Impositions* which divide us, are meer idle *toys* and *vanities*. Good men cannot love peace so well, as to purchase it by submission to things which they judge sinful. If we should lose this also, I shall only say,

The Interpretation be to those that hate us, and to the Enemies of our God. We may look for good, but no good will come.

FINIS.